

The Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act of 1999

FCC Consumer Facts

Background

The Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act of 1999 (SHVIA) permits satellite companies to provide local broadcast TV signals to all subscribers who reside in the local TV station's market (also referred to as a Designated Market Area ("DMA")), as that market is defined by Nielsen Media Research. This ability to provide local broadcast channels is commonly referred to as "local-into-local" service.

Channel Reception

The law does not require satellite companies to provide the local channels to any subscriber who wants them. Rather, the satellite company has the *option* of providing local-into-local service. As of January 1, 2002, however, a satellite company that has chosen to provide local-into-local service is required to provide subscribers with all of the local broadcast TV signals that are assigned to the DMA and that have asked to be carried on the satellite's system. Subscribers should contact their satellite company to determine which DMA applies to them and whether the service is available in their market area.

If your satellite carrier is not offering local stations as part of your subscription, you can install a TV antenna to receive local stations over-the-air.

If the installation of the outdoor over-the-air rooftop antenna does not provide the local broadcast TV stations you desire, you may qualify as an "unserved household."

The term "unserved household" means a household or subscriber that:

- cannot receive, through the use of a conventional, stationary, or outdoor rooftop antenna, an over-the-air network signal of Grade B intensity as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC);
- has a dish that is permanently attached to a recreational vehicle or a commercial truck; or
- is subject to a waiver granted by the television network station.

Your satellite carrier can tell you if you are predicted to be "unserved" using a computer model. If you are not predicted to be unserved, you may ask your satellite carrier to request a waiver on your behalf.

If you do qualify as an "unserved household," you are eligible to receive no more than two distant network affiliated signals per day for each TV network.

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A “distant signal” is one that originates outside of a satellite subscriber’s local television market, the DMA. For example, if your household is “unserved” you can receive no more than two *ABC* stations, no more than two *NBC* stations, etc., from outside your local broadcast market.

If you have questions about the availability of local-into-local service in your specific area, your eligibility to receive distant TV signals, the procedure for obtaining a waiver, or other specific information about your satellite service, you should contact your satellite company or distributor.

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For more information about the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act of 1999, you may visit the following FCC website:

Media Bureau

www.fcc.gov/mb/policy/shvera.doc

or, contact the FCC at:

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Complaints
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554
Phone: 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322)
TTY: 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322)
Fax: (202) 418-0232
E-mail: fccinfo@fcc.gov

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